

**S-E-C-R-E-T**

NOFORN

29 September 1966

**STAFF NOTE**

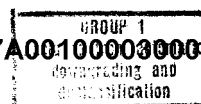
**SUBJECT: A New African Hit: The Cubans Are Coming! The Cubans Are Coming!**

1. In view of the recent flood of rumors and reports of nefarious Cuban activities in West Africa, we are attempting herein to sift out the main facts of the case. There is little doubt that Cuban paramilitary units and guerrilla instructors, though late arrivals on the African scene, have already acquired a reputation in radical circles as staunch and willing defenders of the African "revolution." Castro's military mission in Congo (Brazzaville) is probably the dominant foreign influence in that troubled country, and Havana is stepping up aid to radicals and "liberators" elsewhere in West Africa.

2. Castro's sudden upsurge of interest in African revolutionary causes is probably in large part an attempt to compensate for his conspicuous failure to export revolution to Latin America. The Cuban appearance in black Africa may serve to offset an apparent cyclical downtrend of African revolutionary fervor, marked by the eclipse of Ben Bella and Nkrumah, mounting domestic troubles in the remaining radical African states, and an

**S-E-C-R-E-T**

NOFORN



**S-E-C-R-E-T**

NOFORN

increasingly cautious African policy of the Soviets and Chinese Communists.

3. Cubans in Africa enjoy a few natural advantages not available to other foreign Communists. Most of those sent to West Africa are negroes, physically indistinguishable from the Africans, and some are French-speaking, perhaps of Haitian origin. Castro's henchmen are also better able to adjust to the tropics, and are more familiar with guerrilla warfare in swamps (if not jungles) than are most other foreign communists. Conversely, many African radicals seeking education or training abroad prefer the more congenial climate and cultural setting of Cuba to the harsh winters and more complex ideology of Moscow and Peking.

4. Until about a year ago, Cuban relations with black Africans were confined to diplomatic representation in a few capitals and the training in Cuba of some African guerrilla fighters. A score or so of Cuban military advisors joined the Congolese rebels in the eastern Congo in 1965, but the cause was then already lost, and the Cubans have long since departed. Cuban interest then shifted to Congo (Brazzaville). Brazzaville's pro-Communist government, perhaps at Chinese instigation, requested

NOFORN

S-E-C-R-E-T

NOFORN

from Castro a guard unit and military mission. Small groups of Cubans began arriving in the summer of 1965, and took up duties which they are still performing, e.g., protecting the person and residence of the president, and training and organizing party youth as a people's militia. During a confused mutiny of the Brazzaville Army in June of this year, the Cuban guards intervened to protect besieged government and party leaders. In the aftermath, the Cubans and their proteges, the militia, emerged as the bulwark of support for the chronically unstable Congolese Government. The Cuban presence is still expanding, and currently numbers some 600 to 700, mostly military and paramilitary figures.

5. In Brazzaville, as in Zanzibar, Communist donor countries perform separate functions, either by chance or prearrangement. The Soviets supply most of the arms, train the Congolese Air Force, and are active in economic aid; the Chinese provide some military aid, support exiled Cameroonian rebels based in Brazzaville, and are beginning some industrial and agricultural projects; and the Cubans, in addition to the military mission provide several hundred scholarships and maintain a very small assistance program in forestry and agriculture. Some rivalry and competition among Chinese, Soviets, and Cubans prevails, and there are some examples of coordinated efforts, but little close cooperation.

S E C R E T  
NOFORN

S-E-C-R-E-T

NOFORN

6. The Cubans in Brazzaville are not only the protectors and saviours of a revolutionary regime, but also the mentors of revolutionary exile bands from neighboring lands. They are feeding as well as training a handful of Gabonese rebels, and have taken over the training and support of the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), a mulatto-led, Communist-backed liberation group, which occasionally makes forays into the Angolan exclave of Cabinda. Neither the Gabonese, nor the MPLA are likely even under Cuban tutelage to pose much of a threat to their home governments for some time to come, but Castro may derive some satisfaction from his support of African revolution, and can claim credit for whatever limited success his proteges achieve.

7. Pro-Western regimes in West Africa, although uneasy about the growing Cuban potential for subversion from Brazzaville, are even more concerned about reports of dark doings by Castro's gun-slingers in Guinea. Hard evidence is sparse, but it is certain that the Cuban presence in Conakry has greatly expanded in recent weeks, e.g., a new and larger embassy, increased cultural exchanges, visits by Cuban intelligence officials, and the arrival of military instructors and arms from Havana. Also, it is known that most Cuban diplomatic missions in Africa have been transferred from the Havana Ministry of Foreign Affairs to

NOFORN

~~S-E-C-R-E-T~~

NOFORN

the Interior Ministry, which directs clandestine operations. It is not so clear what all this means. Some of the Cuban efforts may be directed, as in Brazzaville, toward molding Guinean party youth into an armed militia. Sekou Toure recently outlined plans for such a militia, but Cubans have not yet been identified with the program.

8. Cuban military instructors are known to be furnishing arms and training to the Independence Party of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), an insurgent movement based in Guinea and directed against neighboring Portuguese Guinea. PAIGC, like the MPJA operating out of Brazzaville, had some foreign Communist backing before the Cubans arrived. The movement claims to have some 5-7,000 guerrilla fighters, and after a fashion occupies about a third of the swamps and bush country of Portuguese Guinea. The Portuguese control most of the towns, key villages, and roads, and maintain a force superior to the rebels ( up to 20,000 troops and some air power), but are unwilling to undertake the costly operation of cleaning out the rebels from the back country. The result is a general stalemate, with sporadic clashes.

9. PAIGC, with Cuban instruction and with the influx of arms from Cuba and other Communist countries, will probably step up its activities over the next year or so. But, given the

**S-E-C-R-E-T**

NOFORN

superior Portuguese forces, and the apparent resolution of Lisbon to hold on to this tiny territory, it is unlikely that the Cuban input will tilt the military balance significantly in favor of the rebels.

10. Castro is probably pleased with his African program. The easy success of a handful of Cuban guards in Brazzaville has obviously buoyed his hopes of rebuilding on African soil his image as a world revolutionary leader. The export of guerrilla fighters from Cuba is a cheap form of aid, with few risks thus far. He has won some praise from African radicals, and the Cuban presence has stiffened the sagging cause of African revolution and "liberation."

11. But, Castro now appears to be eager to plunge even further into African revolutionary activities on a scale which could raise the cost and the risk. Rumors of impending Cuban plots and possible subversive enterprises are rife in West Africa. They are readily believed by many moderate West African leaders, who are alarmed by the extent of known Cuban involvement in Brazzaville and Conakry, and suspect there is more going on clandestinely. Rumors emanating from Conakry suggest a Cuban plot to restore Kwame Nkrumah to power in Ghana by training exiled Ghanaians in Guinea, and by subverting a part of the

**S-E-C-R-E-T**

NOFORN

**S-E-C-R-E-T**  
NOFORN

Ghanaian army. We tend to discount these rumors, but the post-Nkrumah government in Ghana does not, and has just ordered the closing of the Cuban Embassy in Accra.

12. It is also reported that Castro is offering the services of some 1,200 Cuban paramilitary forces to battle the Portuguese in Africa. If true, this would be the first employment of non-African Communists in the "liberation" movement. By joining the lists against the Portuguese, Castro would be warring against a minor power, generally unpopular in the Third World, and without reliable allies among the Great Powers. However, by involving Cuba so deeply and directly in African "liberation" Castro would assume a number of liabilities, e.g., the probability that Cuba would be blamed for any and all misfortunes which might befall the "liberation" movements. Once committed to larger scale intervention in Africa, Castro would find it difficult to refuse further requests for men, guns, and money. The risks and the cost would rise, and Castro would soon be receiving more onions than orchids from his African clients.



25X1

25X1

Approved For Release 2005/07/13 : CIA-RDP79R00967A001000030002-6

Approved For Release 2005/07/13 : CIA-RDP79R00967A001000030002-6